



Thomas Michael Loomer

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H. S. M.

*THE ENGLISH CHURCH: ITS SUCCESSION, AND WITNESS
FOR CHRIST.*

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH, JULY 7, 1835,

AT THE VISITATION

OF THE VEN.

THE ARCHDEACON OF CHICHESTER.

BY

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A

S E R M O N,

&c.

LUKE xxiv. 48.

And ye are witnesses of these things.

IN obeying the call I have received to address you, my Reverend Brethren, to-day, it seemed right to select a topic of the simplest nature, and of the most extended interest, as being the fittest for me to handle, and, therefore, the worthiest for you to hear. Leaving then, for others, the more perfect wisdom, and the higher mysteries of our Holy Faith, I have chosen a subject, with which to be familiar is a pre-requisite to the right undertaking of our sacred ministry, and under the continual influence of which to live, is essential to its right discharge. While, as inferior ministers of Christ, we carefully refer the discussion of passing events, the state and prospects of the Church in this land, to those who, by the providence of God, stand charged

with its administration and defence, we cannot deem it remote from the original scope and purpose of these solemn meetings before our Ecclesiastical Superior, if we should consider, in some measure, our ministerial duties and commission, as they are affected by the spirit and course of these latter days.

For the first fifteen hundred years of Christian antiquity, Christ's earthly Church was one, and His ministry one, till apostolical unity of faith and practice withered away in the hollow sameness of the Romish ceremonial. And now, for these three hundred years, men have seemed to sicken at the very name of unity; and to contemplate the unhealthy self-production of sects and divisions within the bosom of the Church with a spurious charity, a cold indifference, and even a misguided satisfaction. At length it has come to pass, that every one of the self-separated fragments of the body Catholic has successfully preferred a claim for itself, and its teachers, to be regarded as the Church and ministry of Christ:—all sects equal, all faiths alike, all ministrations, ordained or unordained, all ambassadors, sent or unsent, equally the institution of one God and Saviour.

We do not speak this in harshness, but in heaviness of soul. We grieve over the divisions and separations from the family of Christ, and

our hearts' desire, and prayer to God for his Church is, that its scattered parts may be again fused, and recast into a perfect and indissoluble unity¹.

It is a hard task, so to speak, of our office, as neither to overbear with high pretensions, nor to understate its worth and dignity. In dependence, then, on the help and blessing of the Holy Spirit, whose presence and support was invoked upon us at our ordination, and for the establishment and comfort of our minds in the discharge of our ministerial commission, we will review the subject brought before us by these words of our Master; that is—*the witness He has appointed for Himself in the ministry of His Church*: and in following out this point, we will consider, firstly, *The character*; and secondly, *The influence of our Holy Office on our mind and conduct*.

I. *The character of our Holy Office*, how peculiar to itself; to which no other office of moral teacher or labourer in God's service can bear affinity. There are, indeed, those who imagine the difference of character to result only from the difference of the subject-matter, which, as it is infinitely pure, and infallibly certain, demands for its teachers and propagators a greater esteem and a higher dignity. But this is not

¹ See note A. at the end.

all. We rest and rejoice in the peculiar character stamped upon our sacred ministry by its heavenly origin, and its exclusive privileges.

The Apostles of the Lord were not only the companions of Christ on earth, the propagators of God's revealed will after Christ's ascension into heaven, and the inspired writers of a book, on which, in after ages, the people of Christ should rest, as the unchangeable foundation of the faith; they bore a higher dignity, as *witnesses* for Christ, and *representatives* of their exalted and glorified Master. A high privilege it was to be the familiars of the Lord on earth; a glorious function to be the propagators of His kingdom; a sacred work to write the records of His hallowed life, and to fix an unchangeable rule of faith and holiness for His people; but a higher privilege, a more glorious function, and a more sacred work, to be the witnesses of His resurrection, and the representatives of Himself. "As my Father hath sent me," the image of the invisible God, "so send I you¹," the personal representatives of Myself. Thus He intimated the sameness of their mission, and His own. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me²."

¹ John xx. 21.

² Matt. x. 40.

“He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me ¹.” This strictly representative character of the apostleship, and the official identity of the Apostles with their Master, depended upon two essential constituents; that they had been with Him from the beginning; and that they were commissioned and sent by the Son, as the Son by the Father. This constituted the validity of their mission, and the value of their testimony. And these qualifications we find pointedly observed by the Apostles in adopting a successor into the vacant apostolate or bishopric of Judas. Evidently referring to the act and design of the Lord in ordaining twelve, that they should be with Him, whom also He might send forth to preach ². Peter stood up, and said, “Wherefore of these men, which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord went in and out among us, beginning from the Baptism of John unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection ³.”

And thus the Lord went forth in His representatives, and by His Spirit; beginning from Jerusalem unto the uttermost parts of the earth, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, for a wit-

¹ Luke x. 16.

² Mark iii. 14.

³ Acts i. 21, 22.

ness unto all nations : and to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name : and among them that believed, in every place, the Lord planted a Church, and erected a framework of spiritual ordinances, to be governed and applied by his appointed ministers, the *witnesses* of His resurrection, and the *representatives* of His personal presence. The fountain for sin and for uncleanness which was first opened to the House of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, sent forth its healing waters in diverging streams, which, bursting up in every land, multiplied their parent Source ; a Bethesda with its many porches, standing open in every city and nation under heaven, to receive all comers, the halt and the maimed, the lame and the leprous ; and to give them, not at casual and transitory seasons, but at all times, and for ever, a perfect soundness, by the spiritual presence and invisible energy of Christ.

And for ourselves, my Reverend Brethren, we may indeed be propagators of a doctrinal scheme, and upholders of a time-honoured fabric ; and this we may be by man's delegation and authority ; but witnesses for Christ crucified, risen, and ascended, and representatives of His person, we cannot be : we cannot offer forgiveness in our Master's name, seal it with baptism, and con-

firm it in the sacrament of the Lord's body and blood, unless we can show, that the testimony we bear is a direct personal testimony, and the authority we exercise a valid commission derived to us from Himself.

Now it is clear that how long soever the line of transmission be drawn out, the validity of all depends upon the soundness of the first, and the union between each successive link : so that if there be any where a break, the whole must fall ; and what man dare, on his own authority, renew what the authority of Christ began ? But if we can trace a sound and continuous junction, link by link, between ourselves and his Apostles, the last link of which mysterious chain is held in the hand of God the Son, as the representative of God the Father, we, while invested with a dignity of unequalled brightness, may well nigh sink under the weight of glory, that is put upon us.

We assume then, at once, that this personal testimony was designed to be transmissive ; that what the first family of witnesses saw and heard, they were charged to commit to others after them, who believing without sight, should bear a testimony no less authentic than their own. That the order of Bishops are the lineal descendants of these first witnesses, the depositories of their testimony, and the links of their

succession, was undisputed in the Church of Christ for fifteen hundred years¹: and how much soever it be gainsayed without, yet within the English Church there is still no other judgment. And ourselves, therefore, the inferior grade of the ministry, being lawfully ordained and sent, derive our representative character from him that laid hands on us. So that, as in every larger section of the Church, the Bishop is the chief official representative of Christ², we, in our several cures, are representatives of Christ's witness, and therefore directly, though subordnately, of Himself.

Our commission to witness for Christ, then, hangs upon this question:—*Are the Bishops of our Church the successors, in lineal descent, of the Lord's Apostles?*

As on the one hand it would be needless, if becoming, in this place to enter upon a laboured argument; so neither, on the other, would it be right to advance a bare assertion: for unsupported claims provoke a recoil in the hearer's mind; and pretensions unsustained by proof, savour rather of pride than soberness. You will not be unwilling, therefore, my Reverend Brethren, to review the line of evidence, upon which we rest our ministerial authority.

¹ See note B.

² See note C.

We may distribute the episcopal succession of our Church, in order of time, into two periods: the first, from the present day upward, to the date of Augustin's mission from Rome, in the year 596: the second, from that event to the planting of the British Church.

As to the first period, excepting only the futile objection of the Papists¹, there can arise no controversy: the line of succession even through the transition from Popish corruption to our pure and reformed state, being unbroken throughout the English sees. And here we might close the question at once, by either of two assertions, both equally capable, to any patient, candid mind, of direct and conclusive proof. The one already advanced, that for the first fifteen hundred years of Christian antiquity there was no Church rightly claiming to be Apostolical, which was not Episcopal: the other, that a direct succession may be traced to the origin of the Churches either of Rome or Ireland². But we are able to show that the Churches of Britain also were Episcopal, and of the very highest antiquity, even hardly younger in their birth than the apostate and usurping see of Rome.

The question, therefore, is narrowed to the second period, of six hundred years.

¹ See note D.

² See note E.

Surely, in proving these points, we suffer ourselves to be too much infected by the doubting spirit of these latter days. We consider not so much, what do we believe a valid and sufficient proof, but what will our hearers bear ; and thus timidly shrink from exhibiting the evidences of remote history before the coarse incredulity of the world. It behoves the gainsayers of these things to arm themselves, how unused soever they may be to such a warfare, with other weapons of a keener proof, and temper, than impotent denials and a pointless ridicule. They must study, and weigh with patient and judicious discrimination, the rolls and annals of Christian, and especially of British antiquity, before they venture to throw off with a shallow cavil, what the learned and holy of other, why shall I not say, of wiser and better days, laboriously demonstrated, and implicitly believed ; or, if they will not study, let them at least be silent.

And, 1st. We have sufficient proof that Augustin on his arrival found the British Churches, although compressed into narrow limits, and shut up in the fastnesses of the mountains by Saxon persecutors, governed by their own Bishops, and claiming absolute independence of all foreign sees ¹.

¹ See note F.

The well known conference also, between the Romish Missionary and the seven British Bishops, of whose sees five or six remain to this day, in which Augustin attempted to bring over the British Churches to the Roman rule of observing Easter, the administration of baptism, and many other customs, which up to that time, and for some years after, the British Churches continued to celebrate after the Eastern model, affords a proof of their Asiatic descent, and therefore a high presumption that they were planted by the first missionary labours of the apostolic age.

This is the testimony of Bede, who wrote about 100 years after the event.

2dly. We find twenty-two counties of England, which had been overrun by the Saxon invasion, reconverted to the faith, and reduced to ecclesiastical discipline, by six or more Bishops from Ireland, who consecrated again an episcopal order in the sees that had been dishallowed by Pagan conquerors¹.

3dly. We have proof, in the year 420, of one Fastidius, Bishop in the see of London, who is designated by some writers Bishop of Britain; not as sole Bishop, but because that to London, as the capital of the civil empire, the metropolitanical power, according to the rule of the Church,

¹ See note G.

would also belong. Thus proving the existence of Episcopacy, not as an isolated point, but as a system ¹.

4thly. That British Bishops sat in the Councils of Ariminum, Sardica, Nice, and Arles, the latest of which was convened in 359, the earliest in 314. The Council of Arles is a seal upon the Episcopacy of Britain at that date ; proving that the lineal descent of our Bishops from the Apostles was then acknowledged. There were present at that Council three ² Bishops from Britain. These were, it is most likely, the delegates of the whole body ; the principle in convening such assemblies being to summon one or more from each province, according to its importance and extent. The question on which they were called to decide, involved the validity of a consecration to the see of Carthage ³,—a sufficient proof that none would have been admitted to pronounce upon the validity or invalidity of consecration, but those who could verify their own ⁴.

Now, it matters not whether we pursue the thread of the history higher, or leave it here ; because, whether Britain received the Gospel from the Apostles, from apostolic, or post-apostolic men, at what time soever it was received, it came through a succession then acknowledged,

¹ See note H.

² See note I.

³ See note J.

⁴ See note K.

and was preserved in a succession, which was then confirmed.

But we may add, lastly, on the evidence of Tertullian, who wrote about the year 200 A.D., that Christianity was then received even beyond the wall of Severus, and therefore throughout the south of Britain ¹. Origen, at the same date, bears witness to the faith of Britain ²; and to this we may join the testimony of Theodoret and Eusebius, who expressly name the British islands as receiving the Gospel from the Apostles ³: so that, dismissing the variety of opinions, as to which ⁴ of the Lord's Apostles might have preached in these regions, in obedience to the express and reiterated charge of Christ, to teach all nations, the fact is made probable, even to moral proof, that the living waters, which were conducted into every other western province of the Roman empire, in Britain also, which, as a conquest comparatively recent, was an especial object of attention, and point of concourse, broke up into a springing well; and although choked and poisoned for awhile by Pagan and Popish invaders of the soil, has never ceased to run, and to this day pours forth the pure unsullied streams of everlasting life.

Wheresoever, then, we can trace its course,

¹ See note L.

² See note M.

³ See note N.

⁴ See note O.

there also we find the apostolical order of Bishops; and if here and there, from defect of annals and histories, it bury itself out of sight, as it disappears, so again it emerges, having the marked and distinguishing qualities of its parent spring.

They who gainsay this proof must show that the stream which rises is not that which sunk, and that all these broken reaches owe themselves to so many several heads. And why then were they all Episcopal? But even though this should fail, we may trace our lineage distinctly upwards to apostolical institution, through the Churches of Ireland or Rome.

We have then to learn, when the English Church was not Episcopal. We can show not only that wheresoever its history is traceable, it was Episcopal; but that its Episcopacy is the basis of all its history. "*For we cannot trace the history of Churches further than we can do that of their Bishops,*" is the decision of one among our profoundest antiquarian authorities¹: the succession of Bishops, as of Kings in civil affairs, being in fact the links of history, and their sees the depositories of all ecclesiastical memorials.

Therefore, as a ministry lineally descended from the original witnesses: as a Church iden-

¹ See note P.

tical in faith and form with those they planted ; of which also the foundations were laid by apostolic men, if not by the very Apostles of the Lord, there is impressed, both upon our commission a validity, and upon our witness a value, which none may rightfully assume, who cannot cite the Apostles as the forefathers of their Bishops, and the Catholic creeds and symbols as the standards of their faith.

But lest we be thought, out of the frailty of our swerving nature, to taunt in an unseemly way those Christian brethren, of whom we doubt not, that in the day of the Lord they will be found upon the corner-stone ; though we believe they must render an account for overthrowing the perfect superstructure of his Church, we choose rather that one, who followed within one hundred years of the last Apostle should speak for us. “ Let them,” he says to those who then divided the body of Christ, “ let them produce the originals of their churches, and unroll the line of their Bishops, running down in such wise by a succession from the beginning, that the first Bishop should have an Apostle, or an apostolic man, who continued faithfully with the Apostles unto the end, as his authority and predecessor ; for thus the apostolical Churches trace their descent ¹.”

¹ See note Q.

We especially desire to make clear in what spirit these claims are preferred; not with a desire of unduly exalting ourselves, or of fostering a corrupt pride, by a boastful challenging of spiritual pre-eminence, God knoweth; but to impress upon ourselves, my Reverend Brethren, that in virtue of our high privileges, a necessity of far more exceeding weight is laid upon us, as in an especial way the witnesses and representatives of Christ; and woe unto us if, in all its convincing, converting, humbling, sanctifying, and saving power, we preach not the Gospel. We magnify our office, not to exalt ourselves, but to abase; for it is ever seen that they who lay the least stress on the commission, lay the most on the person; and they that esteem lightly of the derived authority of Christ's ministers, exalt personal qualifications, intellectual or spiritual, into credentials of their ministerial office. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels," fragile, and vile, formed of the dust, and to the dust returning, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us ¹."

And once more, if any feel grieved that we thus unordain other men, and so act uncharitably and proudly against useful servants of our Common Master, we answer, that we unor-

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

dain no man. We prove the validity of our orders, and leave to them a task we know not how to do for them, to prove the validity of their own¹; and bid them render an account, not to us, but, in an hour of calm self-examination, to their own instructed consciences, and to the Head of the Church in heaven, if they have entered uncalled upon this holy ministration. And what good is wrought by them we hinder not; nay, we rejoice, and bless God that bringeth rivers of water out of the dry ground. "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good-will . . . Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice²." "John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us, is for us³."

II. And now, my Reverend Brethren, to show that this view of our holy office does not terminate in empty speculation, barren of results, nor fade away from the mind as a pageant, and shadow of the past, but, according to the design of Him who ordained this sacred ministry, ex-

¹ See note R.

² Phil. i. 15. 18.

³ Luke ix. 49, 50.

ercises a most searching and constraining power over those that consider it aright, we proceed to show *what should be the influence of our holy office on our mind and conduct*. What are our duties as bearing this witness for our Master ?

1. *As witnesses of Christ, we should continually revert to the origin of our commission.*

The providential design of God to his Church seems to be, that in every land, where it strikes a root, it should throw out its branches, and overshadow the whole population, becoming thereby *national*;—that it should be supported by the pious liberality of the rich and noble, becoming thereby *endowed*;—and that it should blend itself with every rank of society, and enter into the courts and councils of the state, and climb up even into the throne itself, thus winning over the aid of human laws to promote its extension and security, and becoming, in our common language, a Church *established*. But these are only accidental adjuncts, and perishable dignities, separable altogether from its indestructible essence, against which alone the gates of hell shall not prevail. Perpetuity is no where promised to its national, endowed, or established character; but to the essentials of the lineal ministry, and congregation of faithful men.

As ministers, then, of the national religion we dispense the advantages of an endowed system,

and the privileges of legal security ; but we deny that these things enter into the essence of the spiritual kingdom of which we are stewards, or of the commission under which we act. We will enjoy our blessings without doubting, and lay them out in God's service with thankfulness ; but we will not rest upon them as our authority, or exhibit them as credentials of our office. The world gave, and the world may take away, is written broadly on them all ; but the invisible spiritualities of our apostolical descent, and our ministerial power in the Word and Sacraments, no prince, no potentate, no apostate nation, can sully with a breath of harm. Though we should be brought down, and bid sit in the dust of humiliation ;—though we should be repudiated by law, despoiled of rights, and, were these latter days zealous enough to persecute, driven up, a shortened remnant, as our British forefathers, into mountain-holds—yet, though minished and brought low by oppression, the witnesses would prophesy in sackcloth still, and, praying for their destroyers, hand on their holy privilege and unbroken testimony unto children's children.

It is well for us to distinguish for what we are contending, and to make clear to the eyes of all who will see, that while we stand for the earthly

rights and privileges of the Church, we do not contend for existence, but only for the accidental blessings wherewith God in his Providence has furnished us for His work. And while this is of great importance in beating back the insinuations of avarice and worldly covetousness upon the uncandid minds that so allege against us, and in directing the attention of an attached and faithful laity, daily growing round us, to the real distinction between the spiritual pastors of the Church and other teachers of religion, it is also of the highest and chiefest importance in constraining our own minds to deeper, more exalting, more abasing, more encouraging views of the office we are charged to execute ; and in calling us off from the earthly, separable, and transitory elements of our ecclesiastical system, to the heavenly, essential, and eternal character of the Church and Ministry of Christ. We remind ourselves that we are not ministers of men, nor by men, but witnesses called and commissioned by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead. And thus we are brought into closer communion with the invisible world, and the unseen Master, whose kingdom we are charged and empowered to administer. But though this our spiritual origin and mission be never so clear, it is no sufficient security, taken

alone, that our message be according to the truth. An accredited ambassador may pervert his message, and betray his master's charge.

2. Therefore *as witnesses of Christ, we should be so much the more watchful over the message we deliver, by how much the more authority we have to treat in His name.* We may not borrow the wild and wandering light of cold philosophy; we may not adulterate our message with the corruptions of an evil world, or accommodate its holy severities to the fastidious taste of an unhealthy refinement; we may not explain away its mysteries to flatter a haughty intellect, nor lower the standard of its holiness to spare the unrenewed affections of the heart. In opposition to all this, and to all the inexhaustible varieties of error and deceit, we have to preach the truth as it is in Jesus, impressed with the peculiar characteristics which bespeak it of unearthly origin, the eternal offspring of a higher state, the gracious visitant of this lower world, come down to bid them that believe ascend upward from the abodes of sin and death into the realms of life and glory.

Thus, we speak things above and beyond all human demonstration, things which the blind eye of man hath not seen, nor the dull ear heard, neither have entered into the corrupt and darkened heart to conceive: things of a celestial

sound, which refuse to be comprehended, and demand implicit faith. As witnesses, our proof is, “ *The Lord hath said,*” and in confirmation we point to the Scriptures, and say, “ *It is written.*” And, taking our stand on this foundation, we testify of the world, which its worshippers revere with a prostrate adoration, that it lieth in wickedness, and is by nature guilty before God: of the heart, which philosophy would cleanse of its original stain, and imagination brighten with a guileless purity, that it is born enmity against God: of man, vaunting himself in the pride of life, that in his Maker’s sight he is spiritually dead: of sin, which men will not recognise, except in vehement passion and external act, that every inward declension from absolute sinlessness is sin; that Christ takes cognizance of evil thoughts, and sits in judgment upon impure imaginations: of God’s law, the breach whereof men deem a trivial thing, all but impeaching their Redeemer of undue severity, that the least offence, as surely as the greatest, brings us in guilty of all; and that the lightest as well as the heaviest sin can alone be cancelled in the blood of a crucified Redeemer: of man’s return from death to life, from sin to holiness, we testify that the same Spirit, which raised up Jesus from the dead, alone can quicken our mortal bodies, alone regenerate and renew the

soul : and in this we bear our Master's witness, as well against the schemes and calculations of political science, falsely so called, by which legislators would dispense with the aid and offices of the Eternal Spirit in raising and restoring mankind, as against the low, unspiritual, and hollow rectitude, which men esteem a substitute for the pure and heaven-born holiness of the redeemed and sanctified.

And what we testify we also seal ; what we declare we also convey ; being charged and empowered to conclude a peace with all that believe, and to seal it to their souls with the effectual graces of Christ's holy sacraments.

And when, my Reverend Brethren, if not now, shall there be need to witness this good confession faithfully, boldly, unflinchingly,—before kings and governors, before rulers and all the people,—when the standard and symbols of the Church seem fast departing from the course and order of society : when men recoil from the unsparing boldness of Christian truth, and take refuge in modified forms and vague generalities, buying a hollow peace with the world, at the cost of treason against the Majesty of Heaven. If they will not preserve inviolate, and honour with reverence the symbols and standard of the faith ; we must give the greater heed that they may read in us the living witnesses for Christ, the form of sound

words, written and engraven in tablets over which the world has no dominion. They must see in our persons, and hear in our words, what they will not endure in creeds and formularies.

3. And therefore, lastly, *as witnesses of Christ, we must continually seek a growing conformity to the mind and conduct of our Master.* We shall be ill representatives of Christ if our examples be at variance with His, and belie the letter of our message. The mind of Christ must be transfused into our own. There must be somewhat of the same intense love of perishing sinners, of the same patient endurance of moral evil, and unwearyed striving to bring the impenitent to God: a portion of the same holy boldness and fearless inflexibility of purpose: a measure of that perpetual self-denial and self-sacrifice to the service and glory of His Father: of that acute, affectionate, and universal sympathy with the sick, the suffering, the tempted, and without partaking of their contamination, even with the sinful: and somewhat also of that intuitive penetration of heart and character, which His omniscience apprehended at a glance, but we can gather only by keen observation, strict analysis, and rigid search, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, into all the depths and windings of our own. What a mission, Brethren, is ours! "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you," to arrest sinners in

the career of death ; to convert their souls to God ; to open and shut the gates of his invisible kingdom ; to feed with the bread of heaven ; to conflict with every shade of corruption, and to wrestle with every shape of moral evil ; to watch over and to ripen the varied and several developments of spiritual life, the bud, the blossom, and the fruit ; to present every soul that is given to us perfect in Christ Jesus, an offering acceptable to God ; and joyfully pour out, if need be, even ourselves also, as a crowning libation on our holy sacrifice¹ !

Woe to the covetous and greedy steward, woe to the careless and insensate minister, woe to the loitering and unprofitable servant, woe to him whom the gain, the honour, and the ease, of the world, whom a trifling temper, a selfish heart, and an unspiritual mind shall make a cumberer of Christ's ministry, a hinderer of the Lord's service, and a blight upon his Church. If there be in heaven no brighter crown than that which is studded with souls gathered by our hands, then surely in the gloomiest abode of hell there is no darker doom than awaits the hinderer of the Lord's glory, and the destroyer of a brother's soul—and, what if we destroy a flock ! To witness for Christ on earth, and to dwell with ever-

¹ Phil. ii. 17.

lasting burnings, is a linking together of most repugnant and intolerable things. The seal of our dignity here will then be a brand of the blackest infamy, eating into the soul with an unutterable anguish : and to this accumulated condemnation, we, if we be unfaithful, are hastening with a headlong speed. For we propagate not doctrines only but characters: whether we will or no, our example reproduces itself. A low tone of daily life chills, and depresses all around us ; and so intimate is the correspondence, that such as the pastor is, such is the flock. And we have bound ourselves to implant and mature the mind of Christ in our people. In the most solemn hour of our mortal life we consented to this question, “ Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves and your families according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ ”¹. By this vow we shall be tried in the day of doom, and who shall abide when God doeth this ?

We should maintain, then, a continual remembrance, amounting to an habitual consciousness that, as witnesses and representatives of Christ, we are bound to walk as he walked : not so, in-

¹ Service for ordering of Priests.

deed, as that this consciousness should produce an artificial carriage, or a forced insincere ostentation, but that it should be cultivated with diligence; and by daily and reiterated prayer, watchfulness, and exercise, so wrought into the mind, as to become an insensible habit, undistinguishable at last from its ordinary workings; unperceived indeed in its operation, but most evident in its effects. And to this end we have need to set Him continually before us. For the habitual contemplation of the Redeemer's life, made vivid by his mysterious grace, and a sense of his nearness to us, has a transforming power, subduing the whole frame of the faithful mind, and assimilating it to Himself. And as in the discharge of His earthly ministry he was much in communion with His Father, so must we be with Himself, that we may catch somewhat of his Spirit, and that our faces may shine with the reflected outlines of His likeness, when we pass from our oratory and solitude into our family and flock. Like Him also we must be continual intercessors for our people, spreading day by day the account of their condition and of our ministry before Him, "that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks¹." And happy is the servant that, in this review of his ministry, has no need

¹ Rev. ii. 1.

to say, "Lo I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done¹?" Like Him also, who in the darkest hour of trial and desertion could say, "I am not alone, because the Father is with me²," so we, pleading before Him his last promise, "Lo, I am with you, even unto the end of the world³," may fully assure our hearts, that whithersoever we go in the lawful discharge of our ministry, He bears us company: howsoever we be tried, though men obstruct with ill-repressed hostility, or Satan urge with the last and hottest wrath, we have this confidence—He is ever with us, who can wither the might of spiritual evil, confound the malice of the world, pass the bars of the prison-house, mingle with our daily toils, wake with us in our nightly watchings, our companion in solitude, our defender in the throng of men, our sword and shield in the warfare of his kingdom. And this ever remembered and sensibly felt presence of Christ, reflecting upon our hearts the realities of the invisible world, is the secret of our power and peace, inexhaustible in the variety of its adaptation to all the imaginable contingencies of this stormy and tempestuous state; almighty in its sanctifying and sustaining energies, and as inseparable from the soul as consciousness from life.

¹ 2 Sam. xxiv. 17.

² John xvi. 32.

³ Matth. xxviii. 20.

For designs and purposes, which the exalted head of the Church hath put in his own power, He hath permitted the outward boundaries of His heritage and ministry to be broken down. Therefore while men, called and uncalled, commissioned and uncommissioned, alike approach and minister at the altar, while our apostolical descent is gainsayed, and the necessity of rightful ordination set at nought, it is bounden on us to show that we bear no visionary dignity, no barren privilege, but a most sacred office, full of a divinely appointed power, to strengthen and to sanctify those that in faith discharge it. We will show, my Reverend Brethren, by God's help, in our lives and labours, that in the apostolical ministry there resides a living influence, stamping it as the ordinance of Christ, and conforming His servants to Himself. If His word and witness be found in us, his Spirit will not be wanting. But if there should be found in us a less, or even an equal amount of self-devotion, deadness to the world, tender love of souls, fearlessness in rebuking high-born vice, and low corruption, forwardness in contending for the faith, and proclaiming the Gospel of the Redeemer's kingdom, of patient, unwearied daily intercourse, from house to house, with the people of our charge, in all their trials, afflictions, and offences; and, on the other hand, of their affections, reflected back

upon ourselves, won by self-evidencing watchfulness, and care for their earthly and eternal welfare, than in those, whom we believe to have no part nor lot in our holy ministry, shall we be surprised if plain men, and unlearned in the mysteries of Christ's Church, should deem our commission no better, that I should not say less blessed and sealed of God than theirs? If they must account for assuming a commission never given to them, we must account for the abuse and neglect of that we have received; and ours will be the heavier reckoning. Let us then consider one another, within and without, to provoke unto love, and to good works. Here is a rivalry without collision, a contention without strife. And God grant that a more abundant measure of a holier spirit, and a closer conformity to our Master's pattern, impressed as a countersign upon our testimony, may henceforth and ever bear witness unto us, that if any are Christ's so are we Christ's.

And whom shall not these things constrain? To be the Lord's especial portion, a remnant quickened from the dead; forgiven and sanctified in the blood and spirit of the Lord; raised to a middle space between the throne of our exalted Master, and the spirits of a world redeemed: to be the visible representatives of an invisible Saviour, associated with him in the administration of his earthly kingdom; concluding eternal

peace, or denouncing eternal war, a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death ; doomed ourselves to an eternity of woe that cannot be deepened, or of glory that cannot be exalted :— who shall minister before Him, and not tremble ? who shall draw nigh to Him, and not rejoice ? who can forecast our condemnation without despair, or contemplate our blessedness without an ecstasy.

Which of us that be worldly, heedless, unprofitable, shall endure His withering scrutiny, when He shall be revealed from heaven with fire ; or in the sunshine of his final acceptance remember our toil and labour ? Who shall remember the contradiction and the cross, when the dead shall ascend up out of the depths of the sea, spread over the plains, and stand upon the mountains, when we and our people shall meet in the day of that mighty gathering, when the judgment shall be set, condemnation utter its thunders, and its voice die away in the peace of heaven ; and the New Jerusalem, the foundation and corner-stones¹ whereof, with Him, we are, shall be for ever filled with the unimaginable glories of Almighty God.

¹ Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 14.

APPENDIX.

(A.)—Page 5.

“From whence it appears that the first unity of the Church, considered in itself, besides that of the Head, which is one Christ, and the life communicated from that one Head, which is one Spirit, relieth upon the original of it. 1 Cor. iii. 11. Eph. ii. 19—21. 1. The unity of origination. 2. Of faith. 3. Of sacraments. 4. Of hope. 5. Of charity. 6. All the Churches of God are united into one, by *the unity of discipline and government*, by virtue whereof the same Christ ruleth in them all.”

“Cum sit a Christo una Ecclesia per totum mundum in multa membra divisa, item Episcopatus unus Episcoporum multorum concordi numerositate diffusus. Cyprian.” Pearson Expos: of Creed, Article ix. 341. and note.

“Corpus sumus de conscientiâ religionis et *disciplinæ unitate*, et spei fœdere.”—Tertullian. Apol. xxxix.

(B.)—Page 10.

—“Catholic and Anti-Episcopal are contradictory terms.

“From Christ’s time till this day, there was never any one Catholic, in the Eastern, Southern, or Northern Churches, who professed himself to be Anti-Episcopal, but only such as were cast out for heretics or schismatics. The same I say of

the Western Church for the first fifteen hundred years. Let him (Baxter, against whom Bramhall writes) show me but one formed Church without a Bishop, or the name of one lay Presbyter, in all that time, who exercised or challenged Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, or the power of the keys in the Church before Calvin's return to Geneva in the year 1538, after he had subscribed the Augustan Confession and Apology for Bishops, and I will give him leave to be as Anti-Episcopal as he will. I will show him the proper and particular names of Apostles, Evangelists, Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, in Scriptures, in Councils, in Fathers, in Histories : if he cannot name one particular lay Elder, it is because there never was any such thing in *rerum naturâ* for fifteen hundred years after Christ." Abp. Bramhall. *Vindication of Grotius. Works*, 619.

For the same assertion, see Bishop Hall's "Two undoubted propositions touching Church government." *Works*, vol. ix. 504. Jer. Taylor, Preface to a Sermon at the Consecration of the Archbishops and Bishops at Dublin. Hooker's Preface to *Eccl. Pol. Sect. 2*; and book vii. c. 1. Overall's *Convocation Book*, p. 185.

. . . . "The Catholic practice of Christendom for fifteen hundred years is so insupportable a prejudice against the enemies of Episcopacy, that they must bring admirable evidence of Scripture, or a clear revelation proved by miracles, or a contrary undoubted tradition apostolical for themselves, or else hope for no belief against the prescribed possession of so many ages."—Jer. Taylor's *Episcopacy asserted*, &c.

(C.)—Page 10.

Τὸν οὖν ἐπίσκοπον δῆλον ὅτι ὡς αὐτὸν τὸν Κύριον δεῖ προσβλέπειν. Ignat. ad Ephes.

Ἡμᾶς πρέπειν ἐστὶν ἐπακούειν κατὰ μηδεμίαν ὑπόκρισιν· ἐπεὶ οὐχ ὅτι τὸν ἐπίσκοπον τοῦτον τὸν βλεπόμενον πλανᾷ τις, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἀόρατον παραλογίζεται. Ad. Magnes.

(D.)—Page 11.

The Nag's Head consecration.

(E.)—Page 11.

Palmer's *Origines Liturgicæ*, vol. ii. 249—251, and note f.

(F.)—Page 12.

“ Things continued thus, when, anno 596, Pope Gregory the Great sent Austin the monk to convert these Saxons, who, after his first expedition, being at Arles, consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, applied himself more closely to this errand than he had done before. He found Paganism covering the greatest parts of the Island, but withal a considerable Church among the Britains ; seven Bishops they had, as Bede informs us . . . Their sees were Hereford, Tavensis or Llandaff, Lhan-Padern-Vaur, Bangor, Elviensis or St. Asaph, Worcester, and Morganensis, supposed by many to be Glamorgan, but that being the same with Llandaff, R. Hoveden reckons Chester in the room of it, or, as Bishop Usher thinks not improbable, it might be *Caer-Guby*, or *Holy-head*, in the Isle of Anglesea. These seven were under the superintendency of a Metropolitan, whose *Archi-episcopal See* had been formerly at *Caer-leon* upon *Uske*, (the famous river *Isca*,) in Monmouthshire, but some years before Austin's arrival, had been translated to *Menevia*, or *St. David's*, (so called from the Bishop that translated it,) in *Pembrokeshire*, though for some time after retaining the title of Archbishop of *Caer-Leon*. And to him were the Welsh Bishops subject ; and by him ordained, as he by them, until the time of King Henry the First. . . .

—“ This Church had rites and usages vastly different from them of Rome, both for the administration of baptism and many other customs—a most infallible argument that the *Britannic Churches* had no dependence upon, had held no communication with the Church of Rome. Their celebration of Easter after the manner of the *Asiatic Churches*, clearly

showing that they had originally derived their religion from those eastern parts."—Cave on the Government of the Church, pp. 247—250 ; Stillingfleet's *Origines Britannicæ*, 356—358 ; Hooker, vii. c. 1 ; Bingham's *Antiquities*, book 2, xviii. 2. and 9, 1, 11. and 9. vi. 20.

(G.)—Page 13.

Palmer's *Origines Liturgicæ*, vol. ii. 250.

(H.)—Page 14.

Stillingfleet, 194, 195.

(I.)—Page 14.

"Three British Bishops subscribed the decrees of that Synod," Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelfius de civitate *Coloniæ Londinensium*, forsan *Camalodunum*, Colchester.—Cave's *Government of the Church*, 245 ; Stillingfleet, 74, 75 ; or *Colonia Lindi. Lincoln* ; Bingham's *Antiq.* 9. vi. 20.

(J.)—Page 14.

The schism of Donatus, involving the conflicting claims of Majorinus and Cæcilianus to the see of Carthage.

(K.)—Page 14.

Taylor's *Episcopacy asserted*, &c. sect. xli.

(L.)—Page 15.

Tertullian says—"The kingdom of Christ was advanced among them (the Britains), and that Christ was solemnly worshipped by them."—*Contra Judæos*, c. 7. He was a man of too much understanding to expose himself to the contempt of the Jews, by mentioning this as a thing so well known at that time, if the Britains were then known to be no Christians.

He says also—"Et Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita." The Gospel had access to those parts

of Britain whither the Romans had none. Which doth prove, that Christianity was then received beyond the wall, but not by the Scots, who were not yet settled in those parts; but by the old Britains, who were driven thither, as appears by the account given by Xiphilin, out of Dio, who saith that the Britains were divided into two sects, the Mæatæ and the Caledonii. The former dwelt by the wall, and the latter beyond them. These were the extra-provincial Britains.”—Stillingfleet, 50—52.

(M.)—Page 15.

Stillingfleet, 57.

(N.)—Page 15.

Euseb. Demstr. Evang. l. 3. c. 7. p. 113. Some of the Apostles passed—“ἐπὶ τὰς καλουμένας Βρεταννίκας νήσους.” And Theodoret expressly names the Britains.—quoted by Stillingfleet, 36, 37.

(O.)—Page 15.

Palmer’s Origines Liturgicæ, vol. ii. 250, note e; Stillingfleet, 38—48.

(P.)—Page 16.

Stillingfleet, 77.

(Q.)—Page 17.

Tertull. de Præscr. Hæret. xxxii.—“Edant ergo origines ecclesiarum suarum: evolvant ordinem Episcoporum suorum ita per successiones ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille Episcopus aliquem ex Apostolis vel apostolicis viris, qui tamen cum apostolis perseveraverit habuerit auctorem et antecessorem. Hoc enim modo Ecclesiæ Apostolicæ census suos deferunt.”

(R.)—Page 19.

“The second (scandal) is intended to raise envy against us, as the uncharitable censurers and condemners of those Reformed Churches abroad which differ from our government;

wherein we do justly complain of a slanderous aspersion cast upon us. We love and honour those sister Churches as the dear spouse of Christ. We bless God for them, and we do heartily wish unto them that happiness, in the partnership of our administration, which, I doubt not, but they do no less heartily wish unto themselves. * * *

“When we speak of Divine Right, we mean not an express law of God, requiring it upon the absolute necessity of the being of a Church, what hindrances soever may interpose; but a Divine institution, warranting it where it is, and requiring it where it may be had.”—Bishop Hall’s *Divine Right of Episcopacy*, vol. ix. 634, &c. &c. &c.

THE END.

